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NANTYGLO AND BLAINA  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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# REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

### 1925.

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ABERTILLERY :  
WILLIAM JONES, CARLYLE PRINTING WORKS.

—  
1926



# Nantyglo & Blaina Urban District Council

## REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1925.

*Chairman* - - - Councillor J. CHARD, J.P.

*Vice-Chairman* - - - Councillor L. WILLIAMS.

### *Members:*

Coun. J. L. ADAMS

Coun. C. FEAR

„ H. ASHTON

„ W. H. DAVIES

„ W. T. AUBREY

„ EVAN EVANS

„ EDWARD LEWIS

„ A. H. SHARREM

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„ E. COUSINS

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*Clerk to the Council* - - - L. A. WALLEN

*Accountant* - - - E. J. HELT

*Surveyor* - - - J. E. MORGAN JOB

### HEALTH COMMITTEE.

*Chairman* - - - Coun L. WILLIAMS

*Medical Officer of Health* - Dr. J. O'C. FITZSIMONS,  
L.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

*Sanitary Inspector* - - - W. T. ANGELL, A.R.S.I.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE NANTYGLO  
AND BLAINA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of submitting to you my report for the year 1925. In accordance with the requirements of the Minister of Health this is a survey report of the last five years.

The area of the district is 3,862 acres.

Population according to 1921 census—16,453.

Population estimated 1925—16,920.

Rateable value of district—£46,025.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£173.

Birth rate per 1,000—20·09.

Number of births living—340.

Legitimate births—328. Males 171, females 157.

Illegitimate births—12. Males 8, females 4.

General birth rate of England and Wales—18·3.

Death rate per 1,000—11·22.

Number of deaths—190. Males 92, females 98.

Number of deaths under one year—33. Males 17, females 16.

Infantile death rate—97·05.

General death rate of England and Wales—12·2.

### **Infectious Diseases.**

The total number of infectious cases notified was 252, *i.e.*, Chicken Pox 50, Pneumonia 112, Scarlet Fever 29, Ophthalmia Neonatorum 10, Encephalitis Lethargica 1, Diphtheria 1, Enteric Fever 13, Whooping Cough 4, Tuberculosis 26, Erysipelas 6.

### **Zymotic Mortality.**

Small Pox 0, Measles 3, Enteric Fever 4, Scarlet Fever 0, Whooping Cough 2, Diphtheria and Membraneous Croup 0, Diarrhoea and Enteritis 1. Total deaths from Zymotic diseases 10, as compared with 5 for 1924.

### Infantile Mortality for 5 Years.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of Deaths under 1 year...33	24	33	41	49	
Number of Births ...	...340	350	350	389	490
Infantile mortality per 1000 ...97·05	68·5	94·28	105·4	100·00	

### Scarlet Fever.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified ... 29	131	16	18	101	
Number of Deaths ... 0	0	0	0	0	
Death Rate per 1000 ...0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00
Do., England and Wales ...0·03	0·02	0·03	0·04	0·03	

### Erysipelas.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified ... 6	2	9	5	11	
Number of Deaths ... 0	0	0	0	0	
Death Rate per 1000 ...0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00	0·00

### Encephalitis Lethargica.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified ... 1	0	0	0	0	
Number of Deaths ... 1	0	0	0	0	

### Cerebro-Spinal Fever.

None.

### Acute Polio-Encephalitis and Myelitis.

None.

### Diphtheria and Membranous Croup.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified ... 0	0	0	3	2	
Number of Deaths ... 0	0	0	1	no record	
Death Rate per 1000 ...0·00	0·00	0·00	·05	no record	
Do., England and Wales ...0·07	0·06	0·07	0·11	0·12	

### Enteric Fever.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified	... 13	21	6	1	0
Number of Deaths	... 4	3	0	0	0
Death Rate per 1000	... .24	.17	0.00	0.00	0.00
Do., England and Wales	...0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02

### Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified	... 10	12	16	12	5

### Measles.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of Deaths	... 3	0	7	0	no record

### Pneumonia.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified	... 112	76	141	134	no record
Number of Deaths	... 20	12	21	23	no record
Death Rate per 1000	...1.17	.70	1.21	1.34	no record

### Puerperal Fever.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified	... 0	0	1	0	0
Number of Deaths	... 0	0	0	0	0
Death Rate per 1000	...0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Tuberculosis.

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of cases notified	... 26	26	16	24	12
Number of Deaths	... 14	10	13	10	no record
Death Rate per 1000	... .83	.58	.76	.58	no record

Drs. J. L. Thomas and J. W. Hyde attend at Blaina on the first and third Wednesdays in each month. All suspected cases are referred for their opinion. There is an increase in the suspected number of cases of tuberculosis due to bad housing and insufficient food and clothing, due to the conditions of mining in the district for the last five years.

On receipt of a notification of an infectious disease the Sanitary Inspector visits and carries out the necessary disinfection.



## Housing.

Number of Houses in the district	...	...	3120
„ erected during last five years :			
(a) by Council...	...		120
(b) by private enterprise	...		3
„ erected during 1925 :			
(a) by Council...	...		20
(b) by private enterprise	...		0
„ inspected for defects in 1925	...		800
„ unfit for habitation in 1925	...		30
„ defects remedied without service of formal notices	...		120
„ closing orders served in 1925	...		10
„ notices served to abate nuisances in 1925	..	...	90
„ statutory notices served to abate nuisances under Sec. 28 of 1919 Act (affecting 71 houses)	...		18

Very little was done consequent upon the owners' inability to carry out the work because no rents were received. The Council was not able to do the work through lack of funds.

The efforts for the improvement of the public health of the district are rendered ineffective because of the great and urgent need for houses. Not only is the overcrowding inimical to health but it must undermine all ideas of decency and public morals that should be associated with the home. I understand that you are now considering a scheme to repair some old "houses" in the district. In my opinion this money would be better spent in demolishing them. They are, and always will be, an eyesore. They are mostly two or three-roomed houses, low, dark and badly ventilated. Like rotten teeth they are a breeding base for germs, from which they sally forth to take their toll of human life. Plaster and paint will not admit fresh air and sunlight without windows. You want new houses, not reconditioned hovels.

## **Scavenging.**

In the greater part of the district scavenging is done by lorries and carts. Two lorries and one cart are engaged in this work. 2,600 houses are visited daily: the remainder are dealt with by cleaning out bins and heaps twice weekly. Refuse is tipped on waste ground close to the river Ebbw. The tip is often a source of nuisance, and harbours swarms of rats, germs and filth carriers which are a menace to public health. You will find it more difficult to find new sites for tipping, and in view of this I would suggest the provision of a refuse destructor as the only solution to the problem. Collection of refuse should be properly covered to prevent it being blown about and scattered by sheep. Collections principally along main roads should be completed before food shops open.

## **Roads.**

The present condition of the roads in the Nantyglo area calls for comment. The dust is a nuisance and a danger to the public. It causes infantile diarrhoea, unhealthy tonsils, with all its complications, eye trouble, etc. Tar spraying at long intervals does not seem to be sufficient treatment for roads subject to such heavy traffic. There are some holes 4 to 6 inches deep. The surface is undulating, something like a hair wave. I hope it will not be allowed to become "permanent."

## **Slaughter Houses.**

The slaughter houses are very unsatisfactory. It is time that this matter received the serious attention of the Council. Looking back on previous reports I find that it has been repeatedly brought to your notice. I consider a public slaughter house under the Council is very badly needed.

## **Cowsheds.**

Practically all the cowsheds in the district are very old buildings. None are constructed on modern lines, and as a result they are not as clean as they might be. 90% of the milk consumed in the district is brought in by train from Gloucestershire and Somersetshire. In the early part of the year 40 samples were taken from different keepers and purveyors. Every sample was negative to the Tubercule Bacillus. 9 out of 12 of this number taken from local farms conformed to a satisfactory standard of bacteriological purity, while only 5 out of the other 28 samples brought in by train were reported as satisfactory.



## **Public Mortuary.**

A public mortuary is very badly needed in Nantyglo and Blaina. The present practice of conducting post-mortem examinations in the houses is objectionable both to the relatives of the deceased and to the medical man.

## **Water Supply.**

The water supply is good. Water is purchased in bulk from the Ebbw Vale U.D.C., and with the exception of a few out-lying farms water is laid on to every house in the district. There are very few lead pipes left, and these should be replaced by galvanised iron ones immediately.

## **Drainage and Sewage.**

Drainage and sewage is on the water carriage system. A new subsidiary sewer was laid by the Council 14 years ago, and this is connected up with the Western Valleys (Monmouthshire) main trunk sewer, which discharges into the Bristol Channel. About 130 houses are not within reach of the sewers and their drainage eventually flows into rivers and streams. During hot weather this is very offensive. The river Ebbw should be arched over.

## **Water-closets and Urinals.**

A good many houses have water-closets, but the majority are hand flushed. Only about 10% have flushing cisterns. 86 defects in w.c's. were remedied during 1925.

## **Food Inspection.**

30 doz. eggs and 42lbs. of pigs fry were destroyed during 1925.

## **Registered Workshops.**

Periodical visits have been paid to the bake-houses and workshops in the district. The sanitary conditions were found to be fairly satisfactory. There were eight notices served where defects were observed, and these have now been remedied.

## **Hospital.**

I would like to point out here the work of the local hospital, and its benefit to the health of the district. A General Surgeon,

Ophthalmic Surgeon, Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon, and Dental Surgeon attend regularly. The capacity of the hospital is 32 beds. It is equipped with X-Ray, Violet Ray and Electrical apparatus. 2,813 persons received treatment or advice during the year. 376 persons were treated as in-patients, with a mortality of 4%, which compares favourably, if not better, than any other hospital in the country. The board of management find it very difficult to carry on the work without funds. Many people have generously assisted, and I hope this will continue till better times arrive.

There is one ambulance in the District, the property of the Hospital Board. There are no facilities for free professional nursing in the homes.

### **Public Health Staff.**

The Public Health officials engaged by the Council are myself as Medical Officer (part time), and a full time Sanitary Inspector. One half of the salaries are paid by the County Council. The Sanitary Inspector holds the certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

### **Causes of Sickness.**

During the year an alarming outbreak of Enteric Fever occurred in the Coal Brook Vale area. 13 cases were notified. I must here call your attention to the urgent need of an Isolation Hospital. The present one is not in a fit condition to receive patients. The walls are cracked and the ceilings falling in. This matter should have your immediate attention before another outbreak of serious infectious disease.

The number of Scarlet Fever cases was high, but the disease was of a mild nature. Respiratory diseases, Cancer and Heart Disease were accountable for a good many deaths. There were thirty deaths of children under one year. The death rate for the year is low, being 11.22 per 1,000 as compared with 12.2 for England and Wales. The district is remarkably free from Diphtheria—5 cases were notified since 1921.

Chronic Rheumatism and Rheumatic Arthritis are very prevalent. Rheumatism has not received the amount of attention from a public health point of view that it should have had. It is essentially a disease of the artisan classes. It is estimated that 3,000,000 weeks of work are lost annually to the insured population through rheumatic diseases. To eradicate it good food, good

clothing, good dry houses, and care of the teeth are essential—especially the latter.

### **Teeth.**

A dentist visits the local hospital weekly. Last year 990 persons received advice or treatment, and 3,496 teeth were extracted. Ordinary care of the teeth will go a long way to prevent rheumatism, stomach trouble, nervous disorders, fevers, unhealthy tonsils, sore throat, boils, etc. Ancients used a chew-stick about the size of a pencil, with one end in a fibrous condition. It was used with an up-and-down motion, so that the fibers would penetrate the crevices. This also massaged the gums. The best tooth brushes are made of wild hogs bristles (about 500 different types are on the market of all shapes and sizes) with open or ventilated backs through which air circulates when not in use. They are much more sanitary and easily cleaned. A tooth brush that is used regularly soon acquires an unpleasant odour and taste from decayed organic matter collected at the roots of the bristles. Brushes should be cleaned regularly.

### **Pit-Head Baths.**

As this district is mainly a coal-mining one I would like to point out the necessity for pit-head baths. The system has been adopted in America, on the Continent and at home with great success.

A question that affects the welfare of the miner, and the comfort and cleanliness of his home and family, must be one of far reaching importance. Many houses are not equipped with bathing facilities, which means that the miner has to bathe in the living room in the presence of his family. Perhaps the present unsettled time is rather inopportune to mention this, but when peace and prosperity reach the mining industry I hope to see pit-head baths in operation in Blaina and Nantyglo. "Health and good humour are to the human body like sunshine to vegetation."

Lectures on venereal disease were delivered during the year by the County Medical Staff and were well attended.

### **Poor Law Relief.**

The relief scale for 1925 was 10/- man, 10/- wife, and 6/- each child to a maximum of £1 18s. 6d. Altogether £73,380 10s. 4d. was expended on relief.

The average number of persons relieved weekly was 5,000.

The only hospital accommodation for Poor Law patients is at the Union Workhouse Infirmary at Tredegar. Emergency cases, or cases of persons who are temporarily unemployed, are admitted to the local Cottage Hospital at Blaina.

### **In Conclusion,**

the health of the district cannot be said to have shown any marked deviation from former years. It is impossible to expect it till you make some definite improvement in housing, isolation facilities for infectious diseases, and disposal of refuse. The river Ebbw is still a source of danger to the district. It is a dumping place for all kinds of refuse. The delivery of bread is more satisfactory, although there are still some uncovered carts. All food carts should be covered in to prevent dust contamination. The slaughter houses are a disgrace.

I take this opportunity to thank your Clerk, Mr. Wallen, and Mr. Angell, your Sanitary Officer, for their co-operation and assistance, which was very much appreciated.

J. O'C. FITZSIMONS,

*Medical Officer of Health.*





**TABLE I.**  
**CAUSES OF DEATH.**

	Under 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-35 years	35-45 years	45-65 years	65 and over	TOTAL	
Enteric Fever ...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	4	
Measles ...	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Whooping Cough ...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Influenza ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	2	
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	
Tuberculosis of Resp. System ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	7	1	...	...	12	
Other Tubercular Diseases ...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Cancer and Malignant Diseases ...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	8	6	17	
Rheumatic Fever... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	2	
Diabetes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	
Cerebral Haemorrhage ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	9	13	
Heart Disease ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	1	4	5	15	28	
Bronchitis ...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	9	9	...	20	
Pneumonia, all forms ...	...	7	3	...	1	...	2	...	3	1	1	2	20	
Other Respiratory Diseases ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	
Diarrhoea, under 2 years ...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Appendicitis and Typhlitis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	
Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	4	
Congenital Debility and Premature Birth ...	...	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16	
Suicide ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	3	
Other deaths from Violence ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	4	3	11	
Other Diseases ...	...	3	2	...	1	...	...	1	3	...	7	9	26	
Totals ...	...	30	6	0	3	4	5	5	8	20	11	43	55	190

### Particulars of Deaths of Children under 1 Year.

Under 1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	1/3 months	3/6 months	6/9 months	9/12 m'nths	Total
7	6	1	2	2	4	4	7	33

Giving a rate per 1,000 per annum of 97·05  
as compared with     "      "      1924... 68·5  
and                         "      "      1923... 94·28

TABLE II.  
BIRTHS FOR FIVE YEARS.

Year	Population	No. of Births	Birth Rate	England and Wales
1921	16,860	490	29·06	22·4
1922	17,010	389	22·86	20·6
1923	16,990	350	20·6	19·7 <sup>1</sup>
1924	16,950	350	20·64	18·8
1925	16,920	340	20·09	18·3

DEATHS FOR FIVE YEARS.

Year	Population	No. of Deaths	Death Rate	England and Wales
1921	16,860	172	10·20	12·1
1922	17,010	190	11·10	12·9
1923	16,990	163	9·58	11·6
1924	16,950	160	9·44	12·2
1925	16,920	190	11·22	12·2



TABLE III.

ANALYSIS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS.

	under 1 year	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5- 10	10- 15	15- 20	20- 35	35- 45	45- 65	65 and over	TOTALS
Chicken Pox	5	5	5	2	6	25	2	—	—	—	—	—	50
Pneumonia	21	22	10	13	8	16	4	—	9	2	5	2	112
Scarlet Fever	—	—	1	5	7	13	2	1	—	—	—	—	29
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Enteric	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	4	2	—	1	—	13
Whooping Cough	—	—	1	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Tuberculosis	—	1	1	1	1	4	4	1	10	3	—	—	26
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	—	6
TOTALS	36	28	18	22	22	63	16	6	21	6	12	2	252

TABLE IV.

ANALYSIS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACCORDING TO WARDS AND DISTRICTS.

	WARDS.			DISTRICTS.		TOTALS.
	North	Central	South	Nantyglo	Blaina	
Chicken Pox ...	6	20	24	6	44	50
Pneumonia ...	35	51	26	42	70	112
Scarlet Fever ...	7	13	9	7	22	29
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	2	6	2	2	8	10
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—	1	—	1	1
Diphtheria ...	1	—	—	1	—	1
Enteric Fever...	13	—	—	13	—	13
Whooping Cough	4	—	—	4	—	4
Tuberculosis ...	17	6	3	18	8	26
Erysipelas ...	—	4	2	1	5	6
TOTALS ...	85	100	67	94	158	252

TABLE V.

# Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Analysis of Mortality during the year 1925.

(Provisional figures. The rates for England and Wales have been calculated on a population estimated to the middle of 1925, while those for the towns have been calculated on populations estimated to the middle of 1924. The mortality rates refer to the whole population as regards England and Wales, but only to civilians as regards London and the groups of towns.)

	BIRTH-RATE PER 1,000 TOTAL POPULATION.	ANNUAL DEATH-RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION.										RATE PER 1,000 BIRTHS		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DEATHS.			
		All Causes	Enteric Fever	Small-Pox	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria	Influenza	Violence	Dysentery and Enteritis (under Two Years)	Total Deaths under One Year	Causes of Death certified by Registered Medical Practitioners	Inquest Cases	Uncertified Causes of Death		
England and Wales	18.3	12.2	0.01	0.00	0.13	0.03	0.15	0.07	0.32	0.47	8.4	75	92.1	6.9	1.0		
105 County Boroughs and Great Towns, including London.	18.8	12.2	0.01	0.00	0.17	0.03	0.18	0.09	0.30	0.43	10.8	79	92.1	7.3	0.6		
157 Smaller Towns (1921 Adjusted Populations 20,000-50,000)	18.3	11.2	0.01	0.00	0.15	0.02	0.14	0.06	0.31	0.38	7.6	74	93.0	5.9	1.1		
London	18.0	11.7	0.01	0.00	0.08	0.02	0.19	0.11	0.23	0.46	10.6	67	91.1	8.9	0.0		



NANTYGLO & BLAINA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.

There are no stalls or vehicles used for the purpose of selling meat in this district.

The few Butchers Shops are in a fairly satisfactory condition as regards protection from contamination by dust, mud etc. No prosecutions took place during the year.

Legislation in force.

No Local Acts. Acts adopted by the Council are as follows:-

Public Health Amendment Act, 1890 - Part III and IV.  
Private Street Works Act, 1892.  
Public Health Amendment Act, 1907 - Parts II, III and VI.  
(except sections 26 and 43.)

Arrangements for Chemical Work.

There are no arrangements in force for chemical research.

Water Supply to Schools.

Water is supplied to all the schools in the district from the Council's mains. The quality and quantity is always good.

Sanitary Inspection.

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (a) | No. of Houses inspected for sanitary defects - 800.   |
| (b) | Informal notices served - 90. Statutory Notices - 18.   |
| (c) | Generally very little progress can be reported owing to inability of owners to find money to carry out necessary repairs. |

Abatement of Nuisance from Smoke.

There is no nuisance created in the district by smoke from industrial works.

Slaughterhouses.

	<u>1920.</u>	<u>January 1925</u>	<u>December 1925.</u>
No. Registered (All very old premises) ..	7	7	7
No. Licensed.	Nil	Nil	Nil

Slaughtering is at present carried on in three only of the abovementioned slaughterhouses but the others might be again used.

I can only repeat that they are all in a very unsatisfactory condition.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

Administration in this respect is under the direct control of the Wornmouthshire County Council.

J.O.C.FITZSIMONS L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.

Medical Officer of Health.



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